

**BUTTE COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION
Friday, February 15, 2002
Minutes**

Held at the Paradise Ridge Family Resources Center, the meeting called to order at 8:42 a.m.

Item 1: Introductions

Commissioners present: Marian Gage, Gary House, Mark Lundberg, Sandra Machida, Linda Moore, Deborah Rowell, and Gene Smith, Chair.

Commissioners absent: Patricia Cragar, and Jane Dolan.

Staff present: Cheryl Giscombe, Gina Ellena, and Eva Puciata.

Item 2: Agenda Review

Agenda Item 8, Mini-Grant Presentations, was moved first to allow presenters (mothers with babies) to leave early. Agenda Item 10, Annual Evaluation of the Program Manager, was postponed to the March meeting, as more Commissioner review forms are needed prior to closed session. Commissioners should send their completed evaluation forms to Gene Smith prior to March meeting.

Item 8: Mini-Grantee Presentations.

Monica Soderstrom, PHN, Dept. of Public Health, and several moms reported for the Training Mothers as Breastfeeding Mentors and Support Group Leaders grant. A joint effort between WIC and Public Health helped breastfeeding support groups throughout the County previously, but the missing component was mother-to-mother support, which is most effective for women initiating and continuing breastfeeding. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for at least a year; the World Health Org. says two years. Dream was to give mothers already committed to breastfeeding more knowledge and group facilitation and communication skills. 15 women received LaLeache League 3-day training at a conference in Fremont. Three follow-up trainings for the moms were held by the Butte County Coalition, and moms will be co-leading meetings. Weekly support groups are in Chico, Oroville, Paradise, and Gridley, with average weekly attendance of 12 – 18 moms (plus at least one child). Moms shared groups are wonderful support. They encourage pregnant women they see anywhere to breastfeed and attend the group. "If they come, they'll breastfeed." Outreach activities have been health fairs, children events, community outreach events, and birth prep classes.

Nancy Fort of Valley Oak Children Services, and Lloyd King of Grandparents as Parents, presented for the Kinship Respite Care Program. Nancy said Valley Oak has paid for childcare for low-income families for 16 years. Grandparents as Parents has given info to guardians taking care of a relative's child (usually because of drug/alcohol issues) for the last 12 years. With the program grandparents receive between 10 and 15 hours of respite childcare per week, at an average cost of \$150 per month. Caregivers are both formal and informal, and submit a timesheet for actual hours. 19 families and 38 children are being served. 17 are in Oroville, 12 in Chico, and 9 in the Paradise area. Caseworkers help grandparents with all kinds of child rearing issues. 60% of them could also use payment for childcare while working or going to school.

Lloyd said he became involved in the support group 10.5 years ago, after taking on a 3-month-old grandchild six months prior (whom he has had continuously since then). June Blackwell and he keep the support group going. Kids come to relatives with a lot of baggage. A grandmother in Paradise called him recently: she

can't even take a shower because her six-year-old grandchild is so traumatized. AFDC isn't enough to cover childcare, so the respite care grant is very helpful. The mini-grant helps take care of expenses like pagers, and helps pay for helping complete the guardianship papers. Target was to do fifty referrals in the first quarter: 50 or 60 referrals a month are occurring, and come from CPS, Head Start, guardianship clinics, and kinship training, although calls for help/info even come from out of county. 49% of kids are placed with relatives instead of foster care; there are lots of kids with relatives and it's not known.

Tina Clark presented for the Youth for Change, Healthy Families Insurance mini-grant. Healthy Families is a low-cost health, vision, and dental insurance for children of working families. Three goals were set for the grant: 1) Increase awareness of the program, 2) Increase application assistant numbers, and 3) Increase the number of participating healthcare providers. A flyer was created because parents thought Healthy Families is a Medi-Cal program. Parents rather have no insurance than be labeled low-income! A family of five, can make between \$1724 and \$4307 and qualify, and stepparent's income doesn't count! Flyers were sent to schools and all licensed childcare facilities and has generated 3 to 5 calls per day. Eight people have been certified as application assistants. Six are family-support workers and can go into homes to assist with applications. People believed that there were no healthcare providers in the area who accept the plan, because they'd call physician's offices and ask if they take Healthy Families, but the correct name is Blue Cross/Blue Shield. The cost per child is \$4 to \$9 per month, with \$5 co-payments for non-preventative services, and \$5 prescriptions. A family makes a maximum of \$250 per year in co-payments. Tina is working with the Premier Access liaison to help educate dentists, who will get reimbursed at Sacramento rates. Healthy Families applications are single-point-of-entry and now are simpler and can be done online, with instant knowledge of qualification. They have given out more than 200 applications. 2,674 families in Butte are on the Healthy Families Program, how many more qualify is not known. Healthy Families for parents is starting in July.

The meeting was adjourned a 10-minute "bio-break."

Item 3: Approval of Minutes. January 18, 2002 DRAFT meeting minutes.

Marian Gage moved to accept the January 18, 2002 minutes. Sandra Machida seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Item 4: School Readiness Commissioner Committee Report

Marian reported they've been busy trying to meet the May 15 deadline. An overview of intentions and how the proposal will work will be presented in April. A countywide model is being created for schools and early childcare providers to take a look at. Sandy is doing focus groups to help in forming the plan. An exciting CSU computer lab meeting was held. The first of the focus groups was held, and another meeting with Task Force members and service providers will be at the computer lab. Sandy will be going out to people to get info too. The process is similar to what we went through with the Strategic Plan.

Marian said she wasn't needed at the State meeting to talk about School Readiness, but had an opportunity to inform of our concerns about under-funding. At the April 19 meeting what the match might look like needs addressed. May need to look for other sources of funds. We need \$100K per site, and have commitments for five sites. Our Commission has approved only \$80K. The State is providing \$150K. So we can't support five sites.

Two of the partners are just starting. Three of the partners are well-along and are great models, just needing to connect to the neighborhood childcare providers. They've been in place for at least 5 years, and sustainability is their main problem. The successful Poplar School program cost them \$300k to \$400K to put together. The major challenge is how to sustain it. Healthy Start was the funding that supported these models, along with Even Start, but they've been killed in the budget cuts.

Although the debate for Healthy Start funding is still going on until July 1, the Healthy Start Regional Coordinator says it's unlikely that Healthy Start (serving K-12) funding will be reinstated, only the after school program funding.

Linda Moore found that the computer lab meeting was very effective; maybe it'd be a good tool to use for Commission Strategic Planning.

Sandra said partners in focus groups had an equal voice in the computer lab, because all responses are anonymous. The issues were on the screen, along with barriers and solutions. The task of integrating schools and childcare providers is tremendous. \$80K is a drop in the bucket.

Gene said Gina Ellena and he participated in the interviews for the School Readiness Coordinator, and she has started. Who we offered the position to was up to BCOE, and the final candidate is a very good choice. Blending the School Readiness position with REWARDS has allowed the position to be one year long.

Item 5: California Children and Families Association Policy Platform Discussion

Gene said Gina and he attended the Association meeting in January. They want local Commissions to look at and make suggestions to the Platform.

Cheryl Giscombe stated that at the last meeting Patricia Cragar asked Staff to make recommendations as to changes. There is a February 5, 2002 draft. Recommendations refer to the latest Feb. 5, 2002 draft, not the draft in the Commissioner packet. Suggested changes are: 1) The issue statement title. 2) To add, "service delivery" in the first bulleted item. 3) To lengthen the sentence dealing with legislative policies. Gina had some grammatical changes, and suggested prevention for alcohol and drugs should be emphasized, not just treatment. So something like "all children will be protected from alcohol and drugs from conception," should be added.

Gina suggested that under School Readiness, "Children who are cared for in informal settings should have access to the same services as those in formal settings," be added. Some examples are Head Start facilitators going into homes or family daycare, and providing social services and health services. This is controversial: how to provide services when the people may not want you in the home? There was discussion: was it really controversial as early Head Start services and Early Intervention for kids with disabilities, are provided in the natural environment. Services are offered, not mandated. The controversy is that this may be a degradation of the field's professionalization.

Gene said the issue of services for all kids is captured in the language already, with "All children." The Platform seems to be a statement of principles with some really broad outcome statements. The Policy as is with the changes mentioned is a good Association presentation to the State Commission and Legislation. The Platform will be on our agenda again, as the Association will make another revision based on all county commissions' feedback

Marian said once policy is in place, it becomes an interpretation issue. A specific question will eventually be asked and then interpretation will be needed. We need to be there when that happens.

Linda Moore moved to adopt the Policy Platform, with Staff recommended changes 1, 2, and 3, and the tobacco, alcohol, and drug prevention recommendations. Gary House seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 6: Nomination and Vote: New Commission Officers

There was discussion that perhaps who be Chair next was already discussed. Some thought Patricia wanted to be Chair and some thought she didn't. Mark Lundberg said the previous discussion was regarding Bylaws, which state the Vice-Chair does not automatically become Chair.

Gene said last time we nominated and voted when Chair and Vice-Chair terms were up There is no progression from Vice to Chair.

Gary House nominated Patricia Cragar to be the next Chair. Mark Lundberg seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Marian Gage nominated Mark Lundberg to be the next Vice Chair. Gary House seconded.

Mark asked if there was any preference to try to rotate leadership between County and non-county employees? There was discussion, and it was decided that this is not an issue.

More nominations were asked for, but none were given.

The motion passed unanimously.

Item 7: Staff Report

Gina said an application for a CBO RFP (minimum grant amount \$10K) to reach people with diverse backgrounds would be coming out on March 11. There will be a screening process for reviewers and a screening for applications. Stephanie Chiu, Rogers and Associates, is looking for someone from our area to be on the review panel. It is a two-day review process. The proposers/bidders conference is about April 2; the reviewers will get together about April 19 in Shasta County.

Rogers and Assoc. will develop the materials and messages, ads, flyers, brochures, posters. The messages listed are those determined to be most important by people in the North State, in a conference in which Cheryl participated. The purpose of the CBO media campaign is to reach underrepresented communities, like American Indian, the Hmong community; those not reachable by the State's mass-media efforts.

Cheryl said the CCAFA membership decision would be on the March agenda. Fees are now based on the number of births in the County, so it is a fiscal decision. Marian said membership in the Association is very important, it is the only professional lobbying group we connect to.

Gary asked Cheryl to comment to the Association that any time dues are raised significantly; they need to provide budget justification. "How will the revenues be spent? What is the operational budget?" The budget justifications may already have been provided in their last meeting and will be forwarded to Commissioners. The increase is because the Association lost Foundation support; the dues jump is to maintain support staff.

Mark asked if we really need the Association to represent us, as the State Commission gives us access to them. There was discussion that because of the Rural Caucus we've received travel and administration augmentations. The Association provides a stronger voice for the rural county commissions, and at \$564 per year the cost/benefit analysis is that membership is in our favor.

Cheryl reminded the Commission that Staff was directed to write a letter to the BOS asking for guidance on how to fill the upcoming Commission vacancy. The letter was submitted, and is on the Feb. 26 BOS Agenda. Jane Dolan was also asked for guidance, and her response was, "What does the Commission want from the BOS?" Maybe a Commissioner should speak to the BOS on Feb. 26.

Jane also suggested looking at first round applications, to see if there is still interest, and recommending someone's appointment in a letter to the BOS. There was discussion to implement a new recruitment. The BOS did it originally, because there was no Commission.

Linda voiced strong feelings the person chosen should be from a non-public agency, and represent special needs.

The vacancy category needs addressed. Deborah Rowell said her category was CBO (community based organization), and she happens to fill the special needs and parent categories too. Three people expressed interest in the position to her: a special needs person, one from the tobacco field, and a community activist.

There was discussion about doing an open recruitment for a person from a CBO, and preferably a disabilities' perspective, and from either Paradise or Gridley since the BOS considers geographics. Cheryl recommended the Administration Committee screen letters of interest and make their recommendations to the full Commission during the March meeting.

Gary House motioned he be authorized to represent the Commission at the Feb. 26 BOS meeting, to propose they allow us to go through a recruitment process to fill the CBO Commission vacancy, and submit the name to them at their second meeting in March. If the BOS approves the vacancy-filling process, Staff is directed to advertise the position with a two-week turnaround, and letters of interest will be submitted to the Administration Committee for review and recommendation to the full Commission on March 15, for approval for submission of the name to the BOS. Marian Gage seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark said mandatory term limits need discussion. If we decide to adopt them, we need to make an amendment to the bylaws. We have been fortunate that Commissioners have carried over these first years while the Commission was being established.

Gary asked that Term Limits be on the April Agenda.

Marian asked when prioritization would occur. Cheryl said the prioritization meeting is presently in scheduling stage. Steven Kaplan understood the Commission wanted him to facilitate the process, and not give training on how to do it. Kaplan's process is approved and paid for by the State Commission, and he has strongly suggested we do prioritization for a minimum of three to five years.

Marian recommended the CSU computer lab be used.

Mark asked if the Strategic Plan will be re-written, or just the outcomes and objectives, or prioritizing those now on our Strategic Plan? It'd probably be a combination: Strategic Planning is finding what your priorities are and then outlining steps to get there. UCLA criticized that we outlined the objectives and outcomes, and then never prioritized them. The Strategic Plan says we'll do prioritization and revisit the Plan and revise based on the outcomes of the process.

Most Commissioners can do the Fiscal Leveraging workshop the afternoon of March 18. The workshop is actually two workshops, Fiscal Leveraging and Fiscal Management. Dates were discussed for the prioritization training, and it was decided to see if Kaplan were available on the March or April Commissioner meeting date. Staff will be preparing a summation of projects that have been funded by focus area and objectives, as per Kaplan's request.

Gary called attention to the Conflict of Interest form in the packet. It says year 2000, but should be year 2001. If no any interests, just checking the box "No reportable interests" works.

Gina reported that 10 of the 11 large contracts have been returned. Gene signed five; others are in the County Counsel/Auditor offices. \$208K has been saved in year one: were we only had to save \$97K. \$295K has been saved in 10 contracts over three years. We are on track.

A get-together will be held on March 14 for mini-grantees to share. 26 of 30 mini-grant reports have been given. All the mini-grants are going forward, except for the Youth for Change New Childcare Center, whose plans seem to change a lot.

Marian said the *Enterprise* reporting our \$5 million in grants in Section C is a public-relations problem. **Marian requested Staff give a report on what public relations work will be done.** Doreen Roberts called last week and asked to do a release; we'll do one when the contracts are done. **It'd be nice for Doreen to come and meet the Commissioners, and give an idea of what she's thinking about doing.**

Gene said Doreen has been asked to set up a meeting with the Editorial Board. Maybe she can help develop a public relations plan, a calendar, so we can start to send out notifications on a regular basis. Kids and moms are great photo opportunities. Sue McGuire of Chico Community was asked to have a ribbon cutting with the completion of their playground. Linda Moore said Calvary will have a groundbreaking and a ribbon cutting, and will connect resources for media coverage.

The Chair will approve the out-of-area travel requests for Sandra (we no longer had a quorum).

Monies for Project REWARD have to be spent by June 30, 2003.

Safe from the Start is having an expo in Sacramento on March 12.

Gina made a presentation to the Children's Services Coordinating Council and it was well received. The Council will be presenting a proposal about a countywide data collection. We are trying to see if there are other ways to increase collaboration.

Marian asked when the evaluation of the entire Prop 10 project would occur. People are waiting for the evaluation, and we have the need. It would probably be an RFP or bidding process, after the prioritization.

Marian asked Staff to report on who our evaluator will be, how it's going to work, and the timeline at the next meeting.

There was discussion whether the Awards Committee or staff should come up with a timeline and evaluator. The Awards Committee will have look at the bids. Martha Saly sent a request for evaluation draft, a "request for qualifications." Gene asked to see evaluator selection criteria.

Deborah said the Prop 10 Committee on Diversity Principles that the State Commission adopted are worth looking at.

Item 9: Public Input

There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Minutes by Eva Puciata.